

Monday, November 11, 2013

Dear Legislators,

I am writing you on behalf of Chad and Diane Ulrick, and most importantly their son, Colin. Colin has been a student in my classroom for students with moderate cognitive impairments for the past three years. I can't express enough how much I love and care about Colin, and look forward to seeing him every morning. Despite his amazing sense of humor and never-ending hugs, being Colin's teacher has not always been easy. Colin has Smith-Magenis Syndrome, which causes him at times to have explosive outbursts, prolonged tantrums, and engage in self-injurious behavior. I like to think I know Colin well enough to predict what things will likely upset him, but with SMS it is not always that easy! Colin can be in the greatest mood and within seconds change completely. If you look into SMS, you will find that these traits are not isolated to Colin, but are affecting several children across the country.

Over the past three years, I have seen Colin's amazing family try to find any solution possible to help with Colin's unpredictable behaviors. He has shown small improvements with some medications, but never anything substantial. This fall, Colin's family made the decision to try MMJ as a last resort option suggested by his doctor. In the time that Colin has been taking MMJ his behavior has been absolutely outstanding. He still has his fantastic personality, but it's as though the MMJ has made it possible for the explosive tantrums to disappear. Accomplishing school work was an extremely difficult task for Colin in the past; most activities resulted in banging his head on the desk or floor, yelling, or a tantrum. Colin has not refused to do his work more than three times since he began taking MMJ. Before taking MMJ, Colin refused his work more than three times in a 30 minute center rotation each morning! I now see Colin learning without interruptions for the first time in three years. I have been able to sit and teach him new things that he was unable to access before gaining control of his emotions and actions in the past. He has had zero tantrums, and is all around much happier than ever before.

I am sure it is with the best of intentions that you are considering making MMJ unavailable for minors, but there are children for whom this medication is life-changing. Please don't close the doors which have just opened for the handsome little guy to the right. He has so much potential and is finally able to discover it fully!

Thank you for your time,

*Mrs. Nicolette Wilberding*

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Special Education Teacher

